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# A fight over secret files

## PBS program details man's 10-year battle

The government may think he's a radical, but **Penn Kimball** says he's just an optimist.

"If you can hang in there, you can really change the system," says Kimball, 71, a former *New York Times* reporter and *Time* magazine writer who's sued the CIA, the FBI and the State Department to get their secret files on him.

Today, Kimball takes his 10-year battle with the bureaucracy to TV — in a *Frontline* documentary on PBS stations. (Check local listing for times.) Kimball wrote about the case in his 1983 book, *The File*.

Kimball — an Eagle Scout, Rhodes Scholar and ex-Marine — says he sued because he was outraged that the government

### Any files bearing your name?

Here's how to find out if the government has secret files on you:

■ Write the agency you want to check — addressed to Freedom of Information Act Officer or the Privacy Act Officer.

■ Say your request for the information is based on both the FOI Act and the

Privacy Act. Be specific about what such files might focus on.

You may be charged for any documents you get. The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press provides a booklet on FOI requests; cost, \$3. Address: Room 300, 800 18th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

falsely labeled him and his late wife, Janet, as security risks. "If it weren't so tragic," he says, "it would be laughable."

Kimball says he suspects the government began keeping tabs on him because he once worked for a liberal New York magazine called *PM*.

His \$10 million suit is in the pretrial stage in New York federal court. He has been denied

some files; others have been heavily edited.

Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr., R-Conn. — who has read all the files at Kimball's request — says the government owes Kimball an apology.

The point of tonight's program on Kimball is plain, says *Frontline's* Elizabeth Karagianis: "If it could happen to him, it could happen to you."